

Breezeway, circa 1964

The leisurely fireworks of fireflies,
The cicadas rattling the trees,
The crickets' slow, relentless high-note, low-note,
All this from a stoop in Philadelphia
In a heat so encompassing, so endless,
The mauve between the power lines is motionless
Though dusk is several evenings overdue.
Still, no mother calls us from a window;
Not even a radio cries out.

Nothing. No minute is allowed to pass.
So how is it that I'm no longer there,
Mistaking the cicadas for a shift of power
Surging through an overhanging wire,
The crickets for some mild, more muffled traffic?
Such lazy stars have settled in our lawn,
On again, off again, until a strange dark moon
Entices them to join the spreading darkness . . .
It's an ordinary evening—nothing mythic,

Not even a memorable neighborhood. Each house
Repeats its homely, semidetached face
As if the matching street front were a mirror.
I only ever wanted to get out of there.
So what, exactly, am I longing for?
Fireflies? Cicadas? Sultry air?
(I still don't understand. Can it be over?)
The sleek rococo of a passing car.
Another summer night that lasts forever.

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